The important issues on which progress of action was noted in this meeting were as follows:—

(1) Implementation of Biswas Committee Report regarding relaxation of the requirement of M.Sc. qualifications for appointment by promotion as Scientist 'B', in favour of Scientists in the feeder grade who possess B.Sc. qualifications.

(2) Direct recruitment to current vacancies of posts of Scientists and upgradation of some posts of Stenographers after seeking and obtaining relaxations of the instructions which prohibit such direct recruitment/upgradation when work measurement study is in progress in the BSI. The need to complete the work measurement study urgently was also emphasised.

(3) Restructuring of the posts of Drivers, and consideration of awards of higher scales of pay to Fieldman & Dresser.

(4) Filling up of 2 posts of Administrative Officers.

Organic Farming

1537. SHRI JAGIR SINGH DARD:
DR. SHRIKANT RAMCHANDRA JICHKAR:

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that organic farming is becoming very popular in our country;

(b) if so, the response of Government in this regard; and

(c) the steps being taken to encourage organic farming?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI CHATURANAN MISHRA): (a) Keeping in view the beneficial effects of organic manures on soil and crop production, harmful effects associated with indiscriminate use of agro-chemicals, etc., organic approach to farming is being increasingly accepted.

(b) and (c) Government is encouraging integrated nutrient and pest management by implementing the following schemes:—

(i) A Centrally Sponsored Scheme on Balanced and Integrated Use of Fertilizers.

(ii) National Project on Development of Fertilizers Use in Low Consumption and Rainfed Areas.

(iii) National Project on Development and Use of Bio-fertilizers.

(iv) Integrated Pest Management Programme.

Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) is also promoting the organic approach to farming through several All India coordinated Research projects on long-term fertilizer experiments under different soil and agro climatic conditions for sustained crop growth.

"Delay in Environmental Clearances"

1538. SHRI V. HANUMANTHA RAO: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that a large number of applications are kept pending at the various offices of the Regional CCF;

(b) whether there is any rule or regulations under which these delays can be eliminated;

(c) how many applications are pending at each of the RCCF offices all over the country;

(d) whether some applications are pending for more than three months; and

(e) the steps proposed to streamline the work?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (CAPT. JAI NARAIN PRASAD NISHAD): (a) No, Sir. However, some proposals under Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980 are pending with the Regional Offices due to non-achievement of targets of compensatory afforestation in some States.

(b) Para 4.12 of Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980 Rules & Guidelines lays down the specific time limits for disposal of references at various levels.

(c) Number of proposals pending with the Regional Offices of the Ministry under Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980 are as under:—

(1)	Regional Office, Bangalore	Nil
(2)	Regional Office, Bhubaneswar	8
(3)	Regional Office, Bhopal	48
(4)	Regional Office, Shilong	Nil
(5)	Regional Office, Chandigarh	4
(6)	Regional Office, Lucknow	19

(d) Number of proposals pending with Regional offices under Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980 for more than three months are as under:—

(1)	Regional Office, Bangalore	Nil
(2)	Regional Office, Bhubaneswar	3
(3)	Regional Office, Bhopal	20
(4)	Regional Office, Shilong	Nil
(5)	Regional Office, Chandigarh	Nil
(6)	Regional Office, Lucknow	5

(e) As per Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980 Rules & Guidelines cases which are complete in all respects are to be disposed of within 90 days by the Central Government. However, the delay usually takes place due to incomplete details furnished by the State Governments in their proposal. Progress of compensatory afforestation also needs to be speeded up by the State Governments.

Organisation of Second International Crop Science Congress

1539. SHRI K.M. KHAN: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Second International Crop Science Congress has been organised at New Delhi recently;

(b) if so, the details thereof with objectives;

(c) whether some suggestions were given in the Conference; and

(d) if so, the details thereof with steps proposed to be taken by Government to implement the same?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI CHATURANAN MISHRA): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The objective of the International Crop Science Congress was to assemble leaders of Crop Science Research from across the world and young scientists together to share knowledge and research technologies to impinge upon the endeavour of increasing Crop Productivity in an ecologically acceptable, sustainable and environmentally safe manner. This was achieved by developing a scientific programme which included five plenary lectures and eleven symposia where about 65 invited speakers made presentations, poster presentations by over 800 scientists and six Working Group discussions on topics of scientific and societal relevance.

(c) Technical suggestions abounded in the presentations made by the Plenary and Symposia speakers. Each session was accompanied by wide ranging discussions from the floor. The proceedings of the Congress will be brought out in print and will contain the details of the presentations and discussions. To cite one of the numerous examples is the call for increased Public and Private investment in infrastructure, such as roads and storage facilities to cater to increasing demands of improved crop production. There was a crying need, for mechanization as well as farmer friendly price structure for farm inputs like seeds, implements, fuel and power to enable farmer to fulfill the world's needs for food and fiber. An example of an experimental recommendation is interspecific hybridization for resistence to the deadly phylloxera of grapes.

(d) The printed proceedings containing the suggestions and recommendations of the Congress will be forwarded to Scientific organizations of the Country and will be received by the Government for appropriate follow-up action.

Elimination of losses on Uneconomic Railway Lines

1540. SHRIMATI VEENA VERMA:
SHRI SUSHILKUMAR SAMBHAJIRAO SHINDE:

Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether steps/decisions have been taken